Politics and Policy Studies

About this area of study:

As a field of study, Politics and Policy Studies is predominantly concerned with understanding the exercise of power in its many forms. Located within the broader discipline of Political Science, it seeks to provide students with a language and concepts with which to explain, justify and criticise contemporary society. Analysing the relationship between power and authority in this manner, encourages students to develop an understanding of current political and social challenges that governments face, and at the same time, identify how local, national and global institutions ought to respond to complex problems in an era of globalisation and rapid change. Identifying principle concepts, issues and key theoretical debates enables students to consider larger issues of power, conflict and cooperation, and through analysis of various institutions, students develop a comprehensive knowledge of the organisation of government.

Key skills that Politics and Policy Studies graduates demonstrate include:

- Sophisticated knowledge of political issues and policy debates
- Strong conceptual analysis and consequential thinking
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Conflict resolution skills
- Good written and oral communication skills
- Research skills
- Knowledge of referencing and information systems

Training:

Politics and Policy Studies graduates are intellectually trained for any position requiring abstract conceptualisation, critical analysis, consequential thinking and strong writing skills. As Politics and Policy Studies constitutes a complementary field of study to International Relations, it is highly relevant for those considering a career in government, international agencies, multilateral organisations, defence and intelligence, private consulting, research institutes and universities, or media organisations. Currently a bachelor degree represents the necessary pre-requisite for most avenues of employment.

Courses offered by Deakin University include:

Bachelor of Arts (with Politics and Policy Studies major)

- Introduces students to political values, ideas and ideologies that orient political action and examines issues of power and authority through studies of policy, institutions and political movements.
- Key themes include democracy, citizenship, globalisation, risk, environment, gender and religion.
- Aims to stimulate and challenge students to develop an understanding of contemporary political problems at local, national and global levels, and at the same time acquire highly valued critical analysis, conceptualisation and communication skills.

Labour Market Information:

- Median salary for Arts Graduates - $ 37,000
- Approximate salary for Journalist - $45-50,000
- Approximate salary for Research Officer - $45,600-55,000
- Approximate salary for Project Officer - $55,000
- Approximate salary for University Lecturer (Level B) - $63,966-75,959
- Approximate salary for Government Analyst - $63-77,000
- Salary for Department of House of Representatives Graduate Trainee - $46,106-49,565

2006 Statistics:

Adapted from Deakin University Australian Graduate Survey Data, 2006.

Total number of graduates available for employment nationally:	1,407 (66.5%)
Total number of graduates gaining full time employment:	1,105 (78.5%)

What do Arts graduates go after finishing?

Activity Category	Number of Responses	Percent
Employed Full Time	179	67%
Seeking Full Time	87	33%
Seeking Full Time, Employed Part Time	49	18%
Seeking Full Time, Not Working	38	14%
In Full Time Study	135	27%
Activity Part Time Not Seeking Full Time Work	64	13%
Not Working, Seeking Part Time Work	4	1%
Total Responses	**556**	

Table 1. Activities of Australian resident bachelor degree (Arts) students taken from Deakin University 2006 Australian Graduate Survey.

Gender profile of graduates

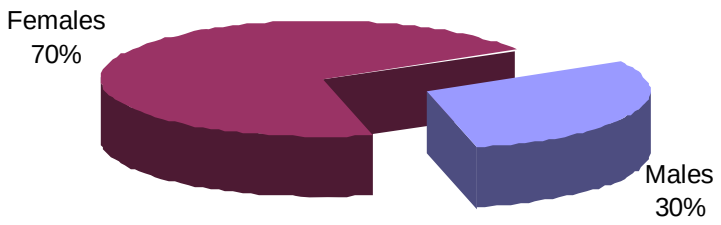

Figure 1. Gender profile of bachelor degree graduates (Humanities) 2006, adapted from Graduate Careers Australia, Gradsonline Website, October 2007.

Related Occupations:

Qualitative research

- Research, analyse and evaluate identified elements of intellectual, social, political or economic interaction within society.
- Can involve large scale surveys, literature reviews, program evaluation, focus groups or in-depth interviews.
- Research nature of the position often requires a postgraduate academic qualification.
- Employers include educational institutions, professional associations, government agencies, advocacy groups or private consultancies.

Intelligence officer

- Organise the collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of data to develop intelligence information systems.
- Conduct security surveys and inspections to enhance intelligence gathering.
- Make recommendations based upon combination of research and expert knowledge.

Project officer or management consultant

- Develop project plans which include consultation methodologies, subcontracting arrangements, deliverables and key performance indicators.
- Assist with day-to-day administration and implementation of project plan, facilitate stakeholder consultation and engagement, prepare performance reports and draft funding submissions.
- Employers are generally multinational corporations, private consultancy firms or not-for-profit organisations.

Journalism

- Collect and analyse facts about newsworthy events from interviews, investigations and observations and compile stories for news bulletins, programs or commentary.
- Competitive nature of sector often relies on network of contacts to secure work.

Teaching

- Politics and Policy Studies graduates may teach in universities and colleges.
- Generally requires postgraduate qualification of a Doctorate, combined with developed research interests and a good publication record.
- There is a great deal of competition for such positions.

Employers:

Examples of employers for Politics and Policy Studies graduates include:

Commonwealth Government – www.apsjobs.gov.au.

State Government – www.careers.vic.gov.au

Local Government – www.job-directory.com.au

Business Council of Australia – www.bca.com.au

Media organisations – www.aimia.com.au/weblinks/media_outlets

The Social Research Centre – www.srcentre.com.au

For specific employment opportunities visit the following sites:

Deakin University Jobshop - www.deakin.edu.au/jobshop

Graduate Opportunities – www.graduateopportunities.com

Unigrad – www.unigrad.com.au

Seek – www.seek.com.au

Mycareer – www.mycareer.com.au

Career One - www.careerone.com.au

Professional Associations:

Australasian Political Studies Association – www.auspsa.anu.edu.au/index.html